

## SEARCH ENGINE RECOMMENDATIONS

### **THE SEARCH ENGINE SITUATION AS OF 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2004**

Competition among search engines is always strong; everyone wanting to provide the end user with the best possible search experience. Unfortunately everyone these days, at least as far as Australia is concerned is Google, Yahoo and Nine MSN. These are the only three that have any significant portion of the search engine market.

You might think that this just doesn't sound right. What about Alta Vista, Ask Jeeves, All The Web, Excite, and Lycos? (Just to name a few.) Well over the past years Yahoo has been buying up the competition and things are starting to look very much like a two horse race. Note that Looksmart lost its presence at Nine MSN earlier this year. Although we can look forward to Microsoft Search providing the search results in the future, right now Yahoo supplies the search results for queries made on Nine MSN.

So, as a small business website owner what should you be doing now?

If your website has been around for a couple of years you are probably listed with most of the search engines. If this is the case we don't recommend you reregister just yet, we believe your best bet is to do very little as far as new registrations are concerned. The search engine crawlers should pick-up any changes you make to your website if it's already reasonably visible.

Work on optimising your pages and if the results are not as fast as you would like them to be, we suggest topping up with pay per click advertising from Google and/or Overture. Both have easy to follow processes for account set-up and management. Both allow you to set a daily maximum spend.

### **IF YOUR WEBSITE IS NEW AND YOU HAVE A LIMITED BUDGET**

To get good results at the cheapest cost you will need to invest some time, and if time is all you have you should concentrate your efforts on Google.

Google is free, but often people have trouble getting listed. Submitting your URL at the Google site doesn't seem to have any bearing on when your site will be visited by a GoogleBot and be indexed. The best thing you can do to get listed is ask a friend or business associate who is already listed and has a reasonable PageRank to put a link from their website to yours. They will probably only need to keep it there for a month or so.

### **MORE ON GOOGLE**

As you will have learnt from the resource on Google PageRanking you know that Google is all about popularity so you have to get other websites to link to your website. The bigger and more popular these websites are the better. Start contacting businesses you are currently associated with and offer links back to them if it could be deemed as being of mutual value.

The links don't have to be in prominent positions, and they should be a simple hypertext link that includes your keywords; no need for images.

Friends, suppliers and business associates aside you should look at Industry directories as they can sometimes add good value if they have good page rankings themselves.

### WHAT ABOUT YAHOO?

Yahoo have just introduced a new pricing model for their search service. It has not been well received, but we have started to use it for our bigger customers and the results are OK.

As for listing with the Yahoo directory, we can't see the value in paying Yahoo for this. Not very many people drill down through the Yahoo categories to find what they are looking for. Most use the "Search" option and this gets its results from an entirely different data source to the Yahoo directory. Some people list with the Yahoo directory just to be picked up by Google. But as mentioned above, a business associate will probably do it for nothing.

### IN ADDITION TO GOOGLE

Subscribing to other free directories, both local and international are worth while. [www.dmoz.org](http://www.dmoz.org) takes a while but Google takes it seriously and an entry here will help build your PageRank. [www.aussie.com.au](http://www.aussie.com.au) is worth listing with, as is [www.vicnet.net.au](http://www.vicnet.net.au) if you are a Victorian business.

### VERTICAL INDUSTRY DIRECTORIES

Industry directories can provide some real value, if they themselves rank well. Search on your keyword phrases to find suitable directories. If they want to be paid for listing you should ask them for stats to support their prices. If you're not convinced ask for a one or two month free trial.

### LINK FARMS AND MULTIPLE DIRECTORY LISTINGS

Stay away from anything that offers hundreds or thousands of links or entries in hundreds and thousands of search directories. They are not just low value they are extremely high risk and could see you being banned from Google and other good search indexes.

### CURRENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- WebWombat Express Submission - \$40 for one page submission and \$65 for up to 150 pages. We choose the \$65 offer.
- Yahoo Directory Free Listing – this could take 3 months and you have to be a member to do this. You can become a member at:  
<http://login.yahoo.com/config/login?.src=www&.done=http://www.yahoo.com>
- [www.dmoz.org](http://www.dmoz.org) free
- [www.aussie.com.au](http://www.aussie.com.au) free

### OPTION

Yahoo Search Technology – sign ups are done through [www.overture.com](http://www.overture.com) Initial submission US\$49 and 15cents a click for most businesses, but if you are in the travel or internet business then the click through cost is 30 cents. Your minimum spend will be a commitment of US\$99.

Members will be notified when there are changes to our recommendations.